

interesting to the calm and philosophical observer of the tendency of political events.

Sir, the issue of this great struggle is to determine the fearful question whether this Government shall retain its ancient federative character, such as the framers of the constitution designed it to be, or whether it shall be engulfed in the great Maelstrom of consolidation. It is to determine whether the sovereignty of the States is a mere ideal, visionary conception, or whether it is a sensible practical barrier against the excessive action of irregular power. In a word, it will determine the question of ascendancy between well-regulated liberty and the irregular excesses of irresponsible power. Sir, this contest is most unequal, whether viewed with reference to the characters of the parties to it, or with reference to their resources for defence, annoyance, or open assault.

The Executive is essentially active, the Senate necessarily passive. The Executive, in its very unity, possesses a great element of strength. As an emanation from the popular will, it possesses great power, because of its popularity. The power of nomination and appointment, and, yet more, the power of removal from office, secures support, and subdues the spirit of resistance. It has the expenditure of vast amounts of public money in various forms, the power of creating hope and expectation in the distribution of patronage, and the distribution of money to favorite contractors. The glitter of office, rank, and station, may be held up to tempt the ambitious, and the glitter of gold to tempt the mercenary. These great and various powers, centered in a single individual, upheld and controlled by a single will, capable of indefinite expansion and the minutest contraction, like the proboscis of an elephant, now tearing up an oak by the roots, and now picking up a pin; now overawing and subjugating a State Legislature, and now subsidizing a political hack; and all this re-enforced and sustained by an unscrupulous press, acting in perfect concert, re-echoing the word of command from the centre upon every hill and in every vale of this great confederacy; against the shafts of which a long life of virtue and integrity afford no protection, but the higher and more shining the merit, the more certainly will the poisoned arrow be sped — against all this fearful array of power and influence, how can an individual, or how can the